BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Issue: 99-46 7 Pages
November 19, 1999

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Economy

- **The Consumer Price Index for British Columbia declined 0.4% in October from September, the second negative change this year.** The 12-month increase over October 1998 was 1.5%, the third consecutive month that BC had the lowest rate among the provinces. Fuel prices continued to be the main contributor to the year-over-year increase, offset somewhat by lower prices for fruit and vegetables, alcoholic beverages purchased from stores and shelter costs. Both Vancouver and Victoria prices increased by 1.4% over the twelve months. The Canadian index rose by 2.3%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC exports, at $2,482.8 million for the month of September, were up 5.8% from the same month a year ago.** The first 9 months recorded a level of $21,339.9 million, 10.3% above the same period of the previous year. Particularly strong were forestry products exports showing a 15.6% increase reaching $11,184.4 million for the 9 months. Strong gains were also made by agricultural and fishery products (up 10.2%), machinery and equipment (up 11.6%) and automotive products (up 49.9%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Shipments of goods by BC manufacturers increased 2.6% (seasonally adjusted) in September over August.** The strength behind the increase was in non-durable goods, up 3.8%. Sectors with significant gains were food (4.4%), beverages (8.8%), printing and publishing (4.5%), and refined petroleum products (9.8%). Paper and allied industries shipments increased by 2.6% continuing the positive growth of the previous two months. Durable goods shipments increased 1.7% in September, with wood products up 2.1%, furniture up 8.7% and machinery up 4.6% offsetting declines in primary metals, electrical products and non-metallic minerals. BC's growth was third among the provinces, following Newfoundland at 22.7% and Manitoba at 3.7%. The overall Canadian increase was 0.8%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Wholesale sales in BC turned around after a small decline in August of 0.3% (seasonally adjusted) to post a gain of 1.1% in September.** Nationally, wholesale trade declined 1.0% in September. BC showed the third strongest growth among the provinces following PEI (5.0%) and Saskatchewan (3.2%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Sales of new motor vehicles in BC in September were 13,404 units, up 8.5% from the previous September and the highest September figure since 1989.** Sales of North American manufactured commercial vehicles including sport utility vehicles and trucks were largely responsible for the increase, showing the highest ever September figure at 6,738 vehicles. Overseas manufactured car sales reached 1,491 units, up 32.4%, but were still far below levels earlier in the decade. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Retail sales in BC increased 1.9% (seasonally adjusted) in September over August reaching $2,845.8 million, the highest monthly level since December 1997.** Alberta and PEI led the provinces with increases of 3.1%, followed by Newfoundland at 2.2%. Sales in Ontario declined 1.1%.

  Over the first 9 months, retail sales increased province-wide by 0.8% over the same period last year, with all of the increase occurring outside the Vancouver metro area. Retail sales within the Vancouver area declined 0.3%. Largest 9 month increases were shown by drug stores, clothing

Report **BC's Transportation Industry**

Did you know...
Canada's 11,000 beekeepers kept 577,500 colonies of bees in 1999 and produced 76,400 metric tonnes of honey!

stores other than men's or women's and general merchandise stores. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Crime

- **Victoria and Vancouver ranked fourth and sixth respectively in 1998 among major cities across Canada for rates of violent crime.** The highest rates were reported in Thunder Bay, Regina and Saskatoon. Property crime rates were highest in Regina followed by Vancouver. However, rates for both violent and property crime declined in both BC cities from 1997 levels.
Source: SC, Catalogue 85-205-XPE

- **In BC, the number of Criminal Code offenses reported dropped from 520,000 in 1997 to 501,000 in 1998 causing the crime rate to decline 4%.** Both sexual assaults (4,391 incidents) and other assaults (43,011) were down from 1997 levels by 5% and 2% respectively. B & E's, at 65,457 incidents, declined 9%, while thefts from motor vehicles at 90,108 incidents dropped by 7%. At the same time credit card fraud (3,110 incidents) increased 3%.
Source: SC, Catalogue 85-205-XPE

- **The number of police reported drug offenses in BC last year was 17,364, an increase of 3% from the previous year.** Heroin offenses (894) increased by 19%, cocaine (3,570) by 10% and cannibis (12,373) by 2%. Cannibis cultivation incidents (2,347) reported by the police increased 12% over 1997 and have more than doubled since 1993. Cultivation incidents in 1998 resulted in 1,226 persons being charged.
Source: SC, Catalogue 85-205-XPE

- **Based on a sample of 169 police departments across Canada, only 4.2% of violent crimes involved the use of a firearm, three-quarters of those being handguns.** Slightly over half the violent crimes involving firearms resulted in no injury to the victim. Almost half (49%) of bank robberies involved a firearm while robberies from individuals involved firearms 19% of the time. In 50% of robberies, cash is taken, whereas in breaking and entering incidents, the most common result is the loss of home entertainment equipment (19%). *Source: SC, Catalogue 85-205-XPE*

- **Of the victims of crimes against persons, 6% are children under the age of 12, and 16% are youths between twelve and seventeen.** Persons aged 60 and over account for three percent of victims. Of persons accused of crimes, youths were charged with 18% of violent crimes and 28% of property crimes. *Source: SC, Catalogue 85-205-XPE*

- **The number of persons charged with impaired driving in BC in 1998 was 8,020, only one less than the previous year.** Of 24 major cities across Canada, Vancouver's rate was second lowest after Toronto, while Victoria was in 12th place. Of the 7,841 persons charged in BC with Impaired Operation of a Motor Vehicle, 22 were responsible for accidents causing death and 95 for accidents causing bodily harm.
Source: SC, Catalogue 85-002-XIE

Health

- **BC's population of children aged 1 to 14 years grew 25% between 1986 and 1996, while at the same time the hospitalization rate dropped 45%.** The average stay in hospital went from 4.6 days to 3.7 days. Hospitalization rates for asthma declined 31% and the average time in hospital dropped a full day over the period. For chronic diseases of the tonsils and adenoids, hopitalizations were only a third of what they had been. Stays in hospitals for fractures dropped 40% and the average length of time children were kept in hospital declined by 1.7 days.
Source: SC, Catalogue 82-003

Research & Development

- **R&D spending in BC in 1997 was the highest it had ever been, but as a percentage of GDP, was in 6th place among the provinces and below levels achieved in 1994/95.** At 0.9% of GDP, BC R&D falls behind Quebec (2.1%) and Ontario (1.8%) even after federal spending in the National Capital Region is excluded. Forty percent of R&D funding in BC came from the business sector, with 60% of the activity being performed in that sector.
Source: SC, Catalogue 88-001-XIB

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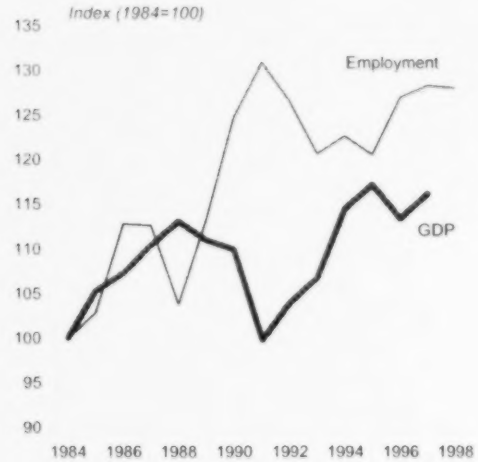
For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

November 19, 1999

Infoline Report: BC's transportation industry — moving right along

Contact: Lillian Hallin / (250) 387-0366

Originally published in September 1999 issue, *Business Indicators*. Annual subscription: $60 + GST



British Columbia's transportation infrastructure provides a vital link for businesses shipping their goods and receiving supplies both within and outside the province. It also supports the movement of goods to and from other parts of Canada, including goods exported or imported through British Columbia's port system.

The province's network of highways–23,710 paved kilometres of provincial highways, 18,730 unpaved kilometres and 2,691 bridges–provide all-weather access to most parts of British Columbia, allowing for the efficient movement of goods and opening the province up to residents and tourists. British Columbians and non-residents make considerable use of the highway system. Coquihalla highway statistics indicate that 2.8 million vehicles travelled on that route in 1998, most (2.4 million) of which were passenger vehicles.

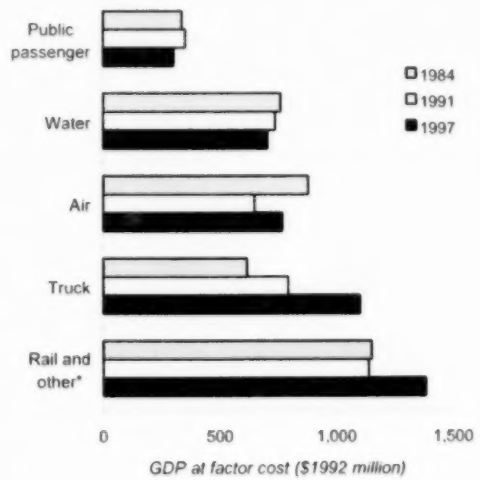
The transportation industry employed 86,000 British Columbians–just under 5 per cent of the workforce–in 1998. Five per cent of the province's total gross domestic product also originated in this sector.

The transportation industry is divided into air, rail, water, truck, bus and other transportation services. Truck and rail transportation are the largest of the transportation industries. Both of these industries have grown significantly during the period since 1984. However, the air, water and public passenger transportation systems have decreased in size during the last thirteen years.

Truck Transportation

Truck transportation generated $1,100 million of British Columbia's GDP in 1997, making it the largest industry within this group. It has expanded 78 per cent during the period since 1984, outperforming all other components of the transportation industry. About a fifth of the workers in British Columbia's transportation, storage and communications sector are employed by the trucking industry, which has seen a fifty per cent increase in its workforce since 1984. The relatively rapid growth of this sector is part of a nation-wide trend, which has seen GDP in the Canadian trucking industry increased significantly since the early 1980s.

Truck transportation has grown steadily since 1984[1]



*includes: taxis, other transportation, and related services such as freight forwarding

[1] 1997 is the last year for which GDP data is available for the industries within transportation, storage and communication.

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Rail Transportation

The province's location as Canada's Pacific Gateway has benefited both the trucking and rail transportation industries, as most of the goods being trans-shipped through the province to or from the rest of Canada are carried on trucks or by train. Many goods exported from other provinces are shipped out of British Columbia ports. In particular, Prince Rupert and the Port of Vancouver are common destinations for prairie grains, as well as coal and other minerals produced in British Columbia and other provinces. Statistics Canada estimates that transportation services account for about 9 per cent of British Columbia's exports to the rest of Canada.

British Columbia has about 6,800 kilometres of mainline track operated by various rail companies, which have extensive freight hauling operations. Coal from southeastern British Columbia is transported by rail to a deep-sea, bulk-loading facility at Roberts Bank. The provincial rail company, British Columbia Rail, carries commodities such as forest products, coal, minerals and metal concentrates to domestic, trans-border and overseas connecting points. The railway also provides intermodal services, operating a fleet of piggyback equipment, road vehicles, warehouses, and reload facilities. CP and CN Rail are the two east-west national system carriers from eastern Canada to British Columbia's west coast export gateways of Vancouver and Prince Rupert.

Amtrak, British Columbia Rail, Rocky Mountain Railtours and VIA Rail provide scheduled passenger service within the province. Amtrak operates a daily service from Vancouver to Seattle. Rocky Mountain Railtours is a seasonal passenger service which caters to tourists, running during daylight hours between Vancouver and Banff/Calgary or Jasper, with an overnight stop in Kamloops. VIA rail operates three lines in British Columbia: from Vancouver via Jasper to Edmonton and points east; from Jasper to Prince Rupert via Prince George; and between Victoria and Courtenay on Vancouver Island. British Columbia Rail also operates a scheduled passenger service, which runs between North Vancouver and Prince George.

Air Transportation

Local, regional and national air carriers operating throughout British Columbia provide scheduled and chartered services to domestic and foreign destinations using a network of more than 150 land-based airports, water-based facilities, and heliports. Canadian Airlines International and Air Canada, along with their respective partners, are the main providers of domestic and international air services. In 1996, WestJet and Greyhound Air, new discount air carriers, commenced operations between major centres in western Canada. Greyhound Air ceased operations in the fall of 1997 . Within the province, a number of smaller carriers operate scheduled and chartered plane and floatplane services to remote and lightly populated areas.

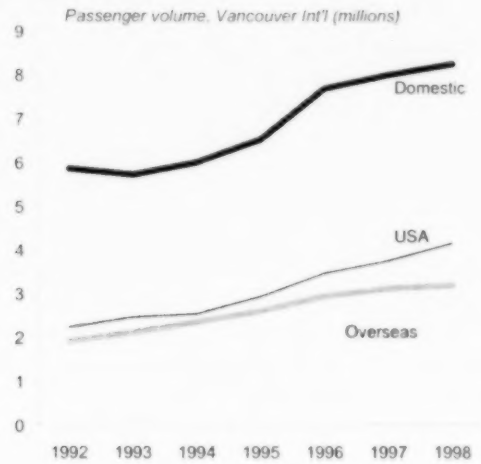
Air transportation services in British Columbia contributed $766 million to the province's gross domestic product in 1997. The industry has been undergoing a restructuring during the 1990s, as increased competition from discount air carriers has forced airlines to compete aggressively for passengers. This affected the profitability of the industry throughout in the early 1990s where GDP declined to 74 per cent of its 1984 value by 1991. Since 1994, the air transportation industry has been growing, but still remains at 87 per cent of the 1984 level. The difficulties facing the air transportation industry were not unique to British Columbia, as the affected air carriers operate in all parts of the country. Nationally, the GDP of the air transportation industry just returned to its 1984 level in 1997.

Vancouver International Airport handles more than 80 per cent of the passengers travelling on scheduled services through British Columbia airports. Victoria, the second largest airport, accounts for about 6 per cent of the total, with the remaining passengers enplaning or deplaning at airports in smaller centres. Kelowna and Prince George are the busiest of the smaller airports providing regularly scheduled services.

The international airports in Vancouver and Victoria have seen significant growth in usage during the 1990s. Vancouver's airport is the second-busiest in Canada, with 15.5 million people travelling through it in 1998, setting a record for the sixth straight year. More than half (8.2 million) of the people using the airport were travelling on domestic flights. Another 4.1 million travellers were going to or coming from the US, while 3.2 million were travelling between Vancouver and other countries. Transborder flights to and from the

United States have soared since the implementation of the 1995 Open Skies Agreement between Canada and the United States. There has been a 64 per cent increase in the number of passengers travelling through the airport on transborder flights since 1994. The airport also handled 255,000 tonnes of cargo in 1998, down 2.1 per cent from the record high of 261,000 tonnes set in 1997.

Passenger traffic through Vancouver International Airport has increased substantially during the 1990s



In Victoria, passenger traffic through the airport exceeded one million people for the first time in 1997, and grew to 1.2 million in 1998. Traffic through Victoria's airport has expanded nearly 70 per cent since 1993.

Water Transportation

The water transportation industry includes freight and passenger water transportation, ferries, marine cargo handling, and other related activities. Water transportation plays an important role in British Columbia's economy, which is Canada's gateway to the Pacific Rim. This industry's contribution to total GDP was $705 million in 1997, down from $718 million in the previous year.

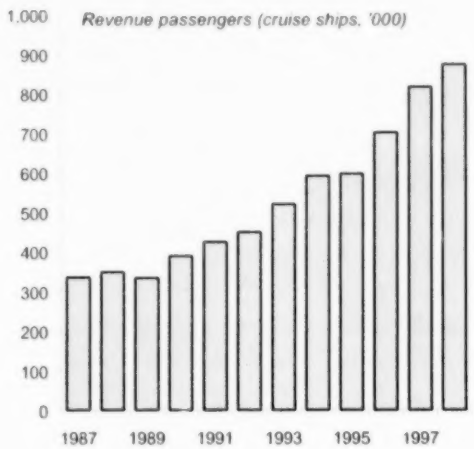
The Port of Vancouver was again Canada's busiest port in 1998, handling 69.3 million tonnes of international cargo and 1.4 million tonnes of domestic cargo. The total tonnage handled by the port decreased 1.5 per cent to 70.7 million.

Almost a fifth of the total tonnage handled by Canadian ports passed through Vancouver, which is the largest foreign tonnage port in Canada, and one of the top three in North America. Most of the cargo passing through Vancouver is bulk cargo such as coal, wheat, forest products, potash and sulphur. However, container traffic through the port has been increasing in recent years, and accounted for about a tenth of the total tonnage handled at the port in 1998.

Prince Rupert, which was hard hit by the Asian economic crisis, slipped from 10th to 13th place on the list of Canada's busiest ports in 1998. The port handled 56.0 million tonnes of cargo, 9.6 per cent less than in 1997. Coal exports through Prince Rupert–mostly destined for Japan–were down 27.8 per cent, while wheat shipments from the port fell 34.4 per cent.

Vancouver is also the home port of the Alaskan cruise industry. In 1998, cruise ships made 294 trips to Vancouver, carrying 873,102 passengers on Alaskan cruises, a 6.9 per cent increase over the previous year, when 816,537 passengers visited the city. A small number (2,836) of these passengers were in transit, but most either embarked or disembarked on their cruises at Vancouver.

Since the late 1980s, the number of cruise ship passengers visiting Vancouver has more than doubled



The British Columbia Ferry Corporation operates a fleet of vessels providing freight and passenger service on routes between the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, Prince Rupert, and other coastal points. In 1998, British Columbia Ferries carried 21.4 million passengers and 7.8 million vehicles. Both passenger and vehicle traffic declined in 1998. Passenger traffic was down 2.9 per cent, while vehicle traffic fell 3.5 per cent. The Ministry of Transportation and Highways also operates ferry services on 17 inland routes. These ferries carried 5 million passengers and 3 million vehicles in 1998, slightly more than in the previous year.

Public Passenger Transportation

Public passenger transportation services (urban transit systems, as well as other passenger bus services providing school bus, intercity, charter, and sightseeing bus services) contributed $302 million to British Columbia's GDP in 1997. About two-thirds of the industry's gross domestic product is generated by urban transit systems, with the remaining third coming from interurban and other passenger services. British Columbia Transit operates bus services in Victoria and 50 other communities in the province, while Translink operates transit services in the Greater Vancouver region. In 1998, 154 million trips were made by people using city bus services in the province, an increase of 0.6 per cent over the previous year. British Columbia's inter-city transit industry has been contracting as the availability of inexpensive air fares has made inter-city bus travel less common.

Spurred on by a growing population and the export orientation of many of our manufactured goods, British Columbia's transportation industry has generally experienced strong growth over much of the past fifteen years. Continental and world free trade coupled with domestic regulatory changes to some components of the transportation industry have been important factors supporting this growth. Given the export orientation and Pacific Rim location of the Province, it seems likely that the transportation industry will continue to expand into the future.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,029.3	0.7
Canada	30,568.0	0.9
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1998	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	110,948	-0.2
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	99,708	0.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,908	-0.8
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	15,969	-1.6
TRADE ($ millions)		
	3,220	11.6
Merchandise Exports (raw) Aug		
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Sep	2,846	4.4
		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)		one year ago
BC		
Canada	111.5	2.3
		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)		one year ago
Labour Force - BC		
Employed - BC	1,897	0.7
	152	-6.5
		Oct '98
(percent)	7.4	8.0
(percent)	7.2	8.0
	Nov 17/99	Nov 18/98
	6.25	7.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.35	6.40
- 5 year		
	Nov 17/99	Nov 18/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4674	1.5555
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6805	0.6439
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Oct '99	one year ago
BC	638.22	1.3
Canada	602.79	2.8

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

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Next week

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- Current Statistics, November 1999
- Earnings & Employment Trends, October 1999
- Exports, September 1999

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